

Let me start today by saying that I am incredibly honored to represent these officers before you. Our class has been told on a number of occasions that we are unique class. I believe that one of our unique features is our small class size in relation to our class motto "94<sup>th</sup> Can Change the World." After telling you this I would like to tell you a story that some of you may have already heard, but I believe fits our class.

**"I made a difference to that one"**

There was an old man who used to go to the ocean to walk along the beach and enjoy the waves crashing upon the rocks. Early one morning he was walking along the shore by himself. As he looked down the deserted beach, he saw a human figure in the distance. As he got closer to the stranger, he saw that it was a young boy. The boy was reaching down to the sand, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean. As the old man got closer, he yelled out, "Good morning, young fellow. What are you doing?"

The boy paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean."

"Why on earth are you doing that?" asked the old man.

The boy replied, "Because the sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in they'll die."

The old man looked at the boy in disbelief and said, "But the beach goes on for miles and miles and there are starfish all along it. You can't possibly make a difference."

The young boy listened politely, then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference for that one." And then the very wise young boy continued on his way down the beach, bending down and throwing starfish after starfish back into the ocean.

In telling you this I'm trying to convey that no matter how large the problems of the world are and how small we seem, if we take them one at a time, making a difference to one person at a time we will have achieved our motto.

Twenty-four weeks ago I was assembled with the 20 people you see here. We had and have 21 different personalities, beliefs, and backgrounds. Over those twenty-four weeks we became acquainted, became friends. Standing here today I can say without hesitation the officers behind me have become a family. Like any family we have had our differences and struggles, but I know that I can count on each officer behind me as each one can count on me.

Our City Manager, Valerie Lemmie, addressed our class in June. She asked each of us, "Why do you want to be a Cincinnati police officer?" Our responses ranged from,

gaining stable employment, to having opportunities to work and interact with people and communities to make a change.

The challenge I want to set forth to my class is to choose *Optimism over pessimism*.

Follow the example of the boy in the story, do not allow the sometimes negative and overwhelming problems of this great city to discourage or deter you from realizing the amazing differences we each can make on a day to day basis in the lives, individuals, and in the communities.

For each problem we face think of the starfish on the beach, collectively they seem overwhelming, but if we take them one at a time

**We can change the world.**